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ABSTRACT

This collection of 18 brief, informative news stories with datelines from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries is intended to provide students with an understanding of how the press has helped to develop and has been the beneficiary of many of the freedoms all Americans enjoy. The collection can also be used in a straight historical context as the evolution of technology, or in a more philosophical way as the evolution of ideas and concepts (i.e., views vs. news, advocacy vs. propaganda, objectivity vs. yellow journalism, and responsibility to readers). (NKA)

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published by the Journalism Education Association

February 23, 2002 The History of American Journalism Vol. XII

Edited by James Shuman

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American Newspapers Encourage Colonists Against British Rule

(1776)– At the start of this century, citizens of these colonies relied on town criers and British-run newspapers to provide them with the news. Now, many colonists are starting to publish their own newspapers and this new freedom is uniting the anti-British movement.

It all started on September 25, 1690 when Benjamin Harris published *Publik Occurrences, Both Forreign and Domestick*. This four-page, 6" x 10 1/4" paper was banned after the first issue by the British Governor, but it demonstrated that there was interest in the formation of an American newspaper. Fourteen years later, on April 24, 1704, John Campbell began printing the *Boston NewsLetter*, the first regularly published newspaper in the colonies, and the only locally-produced paper for 15 years. It was "published by authority," meaning that it had the approval of the government.

By 1721, an independent newspaper, the *New England Courant*, became the first American paper to provide readers with what they wanted, rather than with information controlled by the authorities. It offered both a more pleasing appearance and a higher literary style, including humor and personality sketches as well as editorial commentary. Its editor was James Franklin, brother of the better-known Benjamin Franklin. This paper reprinted many of the highly-acclaimed *Spectator* and *Guardian* essays from England.

After 1725, newspapers were printed throughout the colonies. Although many lasted only a few years, they provided the public with the chance to be informed about the events of the day, as well as to read the opinions of various political figures. In this way, newspapers helped to educate the colonists in addition to stirring them to action over a series of governmental injustices imposed by the British.

Maryland Gazette Publisher Early Advocate of Responsible Journalism

(1775)-Anne Catharine Green, publisher of the *Maryland Gazette* for nine years, died early this year. The only woman to publish a newspaper in these colonies, Green was an early advocate of responsible reporting.

Following the death other husband, Jonas Green, in 1767, Anne Green was given the position

of public printer by the General Assembly of the Colony of Maryland. Jonas Green originally worked for Benjamin Franklin, of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, before moving to Annapolis with his young bride. There he took the position of public printer for the colony. In 1767 he died, leaving the entire business and several unfilled contracts to his wife. Anne fulfilled the contracts and continued to publish the weekly paper, for which a grateful General Assembly granted her the position of public printer, her husband's office, at the same salary he had received: 36,109 pounds of tobacco annually, and 48,000 pounds for years when the delegates were in session.

During the recent disputes with the British Government, Mrs. Green made an unpopular decision, suspending publication of anonymous personal attacks and reckless accusations. Her stated policy was, "Pieces brought for the Press free from personal abuse, and otherwise instructive or entertaining, are gratefully acknowledged; but whenever they shall exceed the Boundaries of Delicacy, or be replete with personal invective, the Author must expect to offer his Name."

Despite considerable protest, she continued to provide balanced reporting of events, including the proceedings of the First Continental Congress and the burning of the *Peggy Stewart* last year, and the Boston Tea Party, until her recent death.

Zenger Trial Re-defines Concepts of Libel and Freedom of the Press

(1766)– The right of freedom of the press was established by a 1735 New York court case in which John Peter Zenger, publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal*, was charged with "raising sedition"– a libelous act– by his criticism of the royal governor and his administration. Under existing British law, if it could be shown that a person had committed the deed with which he was charged, then he was guilty. Zenger's attorney, Andrew Hamilton, argued, however, that "the words themselves must be libelous–that is, *False, Malicious, and Seditious*– or else we are not guilty."

The jury ruled that Zenger had printed the truth and that the truth was not libelous, and cleared Zenger of the charges brought against him. Even so, it would be nearly 50 years before the colonial courts commonly accepted truth as a defense and the right of a jury to decide both the law and the facts in a case.

Last year, when Britain imposed the Stamp Act, which was a tax on paper, among other items, each of the 30 American newspapers being published at the time was required to sell a stamp along with the newspaper. The effect was to alienate editors as well as the colonists. Newspapers continued to publish; however, many refused to collect the tax, thus fueling the rebellious attitude toward the British.

Although the Stamp Act was repealed this year, newspapers are still critical of many British government policies.

First News Service Opens with Samuel Adams' Committees

(1774)– Samuel Adams, editor of the *Independent Advertiser* beginning in 1748, and later a regular contributor to the *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, has organized a group of agents into Committees of Correspondence in order to keep the radical patriot movement informed of events throughout the colonies, especially in Boston and New York.

These agents "cover" every important meeting and report the news to Adams' local committee, which processes the information for dissemination as needed. This primitive news service has proved highly efficient at keeping track of the British militia as well as governmental decisions. Assisting with dissemination has been the Sons of Liberty propaganda network, which supplied the *Journal of Occurrences* of 1768 and 1769, consisting of a record of alleged events involving British troops and government actions.

Another influential New England printer is Isaiah Thomas, editor of the *Massachusetts Spy* of Boston, whose stated purpose is a paper for "mechanics (workmen), and other classes of people who had not much time to spare from business" who would value a newspaper that could be "read at a leisure moment."

One of the most common forms of printed communication during this time was the *broadside*, printed on one side of the sheet only, carrying current news or announcements, and intended for immediate distribution at low cost. Passed from hand to hand and tacked on public doors, these "extra" newspapers give an immediacy to news that increases their importance to the colonists.

'Common Sense' Makes Sense; Quickly Popular with Colonists

(1776)– A pamphlet re-printed by many colonial newspapers was first published in January by Tom Paine, who emigrated from England scarcely one year before. His arguments were simple and grounded in basic logic, making them easy to understand and accept. Yet they were also eloquent and stimulating, for they reflected the thinking of many colonists, both the Patriots and the more conservative Whigs.

It is interesting that a significant number of the ideas expressed in *Common Sense* were incorporated into the Declaration of Independence, written and signed just six months later.

Sedition Trials Help Establish Truth as Defense

(1812)– Adoption of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights provided newspaper publishers with freedoms not previously enjoyed. Yet within a few years the division of thinking between the Federalists and Anti-

Federalists (later called Republicans) had resulted in such invective and diatribe on both sides that in 1798 Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. The first was a law intended to rid the country of troublesome "foreigners;" the second was designed to silence irritating editors.

The President was empowered to deport aliens thought to be subversive. Although John Adams did not exercise this power, it was an obvious threat to some of the opposition editors who were not citizens.

The Sedition Act made it a crime to "write, print, utter, or publish ... any false, scandalous and malicious writing" against the government, Congress, or President, or to "excite against them the hatred of the good people of the United States" or to "resist or oppose, or defeat any such law." Although the law did not forbid criticism of the government, attempting only to curb malicious and false statements which defamed public officials, and although it did provide that truth could be offered as a defense, it was opposed by moderate men of both political viewpoints.

The vindictiveness of the Federalists in prosecuting their enemies helped to defeat them in the elections of 1800. The laws expired March 3, 1801, and newly-elected President Jefferson, an Anti-Federalist, promptly pardoned all in jail and cancelled remaining trials.

Yet a few cases continued to be prosecuted under state laws. The most celebrated press trial during this period involved Harry Croswell, editor of a New York Federalist paper, *The Wasp*, which was so vicious and annoying that even other Federalists disclaimed it. He was indicted and found guilty in 1804, but appealed the case. At the appeals trial, Alexander Hamilton, Jefferson's rival, argued for the defense. He insisted that the press had the right to "publish with impunity truth, with good motives, for justifiable ends," even though such information reflected on the government or individuals. Essentially, Hamilton was arguing for the right of submitting truth as a full defense.

Although Hamilton did not win the case, the significance of his arguments was not lost. Even before the verdict was handed down, a bill had been introduced into the state legislature guaranteeing those rights, and other states soon followed suit. In the session just closed, the Supreme Court held that the federal government could not prosecute under the old concept of seditious libel, thus acknowledging the right of truth as a defense, and the right of the jury to determine it.

Penny Press Brings News to 'Common People'

(1835)— With the appearance of the *New York Sun* on September 3, 1833, a new concept in newspapers was begun. This four-page paper, which features sensational news rather than erudite opinions, sells on the streets for a penny a copy.

rather than by advance annual subscription. Thus, almost anyone can buy it, and both laborers and advertisers find it appealing. Within six months, it has reached a circulation of 8000, nearly twice that of its nearest rival. It contains a full page of advertising in addition to half a page of classifieds (including "Want Ads").

This new type of journalism has caught the fancy of people of all spectrums, including the politicians, who see it as meeting the needs of mass democracy, a growing market place ideology, and an urban society. With the papers' emphasis on emotional reporting of news events, the common people find themselves involved with the issues of the day. However, just as Jacksonian politics sometimes encourages excesses, some of these papers are willing to compromise the truth for sensationalism, if that will increase sales.

The *Sun*, founded by Benjamin H. Day, was quickly imitated in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston, as well as in New York itself, with James Gordon Bennett's *New York Morning Herald* in June, 1835.

The *Herald*, however, would not remain an imitator for long. By 1836, its price was two cents per copy (claiming readers were getting more for their money than they could get elsewhere). It also pioneered in developing news and reducing views. During the years, it acquired a more serious profile, and was an innovator or perfecter of financial sections, critical reviews, society sections, letters columns, and sports coverage. The *Herald* became known for aggressive news coverage, and by 1860 it would be the world's largest daily, at 77,000.

Rise of Dailies Spreads News Westward

(1824)— Almost simultaneously with the establishment of the Constitution, major commercial centers began to see daily publication of newspapers. Most of these were weekly publications that had converted to semi-weekly, tri-weekly, and then daily publication, such as the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* of Philadelphia, which switched to daily status in 1784.

Although the price of most early papers was too high for the average citizen to afford, and circulation was low, by 1800 the pressure from common people for political recognition helped to establish new papers with a more liberal editorial outlook and pages containing more sympathetic political information and opinion.

The first "western" newspaper was the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, established in 1786, and the following year the *Kentucky Gazette* was established at Lexington. Much of the news of these "frontier papers" was carried as "exchanges" from papers farther east, although contracts for legal and government printing often kept the pages full.

But one of the most important developments of this period was in government reporting. Reporters have had access to the House of

Representatives since April 8, 1789, two days after it was established. They gained access to the Senate on January 2, 1802.

One of the most objective papers of the time was established in Washington soon after the city was established, at the encouragement of President Jefferson. Samuel Harrison Smith began the *National Intelligencer*, reporting on both the House and Senate, When Smith turned the paper over to others in 1810, it switched from tri-weekly to daily, and provided complete, accurate reports of floor debates, serving as the semiofficial recorder of Congress until 1834.

Two NY Papers Set High Standards

(1851)– The *New York Tribune* published its first issue on April 10, 1841, and the *New York Times* on September 18 of this year. Both papers first sold for one cent a copy. They have quickly become leaders in the field.

The *Tribune* was founded by Horace Greeley, one of the most influential editors of the Nineteenth Century. By politics, he is conservative, yet he champions the causes of democracy as they could be applied to the common man. Throughout his long career as editor of the *Tribune*, Greeley has frequently advocated a position which alienated one or another segment of his public, yet he continued to enjoy one of the most loyal sets of readers in the history of American journalism.

Despite his sometimes erratic attitudes, Greeley is conscious of his responsibility to the reader, and the public senses his sincerity. He is intent on producing a better world–and a better press. Thus, despite the criticism, Greeley is read by all types of people, and employs and encourages many of the best young writers of the period. Thereby he has changed the press of the masses from sensationalism to one of culture, ideals, and stimulating ideas.

The *Times* was founded by Henry J. Raymond, who had been Greeley's chief assistant in 1841, but whose personality was so different that the two could never be friends. From the beginning, Raymond has sought ways to attack Greeley, avoiding not only the sensationalism of many other papers, but also the whimsy which he feels characterizes the *Tribune*. The *Times* has quickly established a reputation as a reasonable and objective paper, solid even though aggressive. It substituted accuracy for wishful thinking, developing the technique of careful reporting based upon decency and fairness, and soon outsold even the Tribune within the city limits.

The *Tribune's* weekly edition, however, claims the largest circulation of any paper in the nation, at more than 200,000 copies each week.

New Process Brings Public First Views of Civil War

(1865)– Mathew Brady, the prominent New York and Washington portrait photographer and author of the landmark 1850 book, *Gallery of Illustrious Americans*, has assembled more than 3500 glass-plate photographs of the Civil War.

Brady studied photography under Samuel F. B. Morse, famed as the inventor of the telegraph, but also well known as an artist and investigator of the science of optics. By 1842, Brady had set up a shop in Washington, and by 1855 he owned illustrious studios in both cities.

When the war began, Brady anticipated the public's need to see the battlefields where the horrors of war occurred. He equipped several wagons as portable darkrooms and hired young men to operate the cameras and develop the bulky 8" x 10" glass plates on the spot. Having already photographed President Lincoln on several occasions, Brady persuaded him to permit a photographic record of the war. They were permitted to go anywhere and were frequently present when the fighting started.

Although Brady did not personally operate many of the cameras, the entire project was his enterprise, and he takes credit for the work. He hired a staff of 20 "operators," whom he supervised. Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan and George Bamard all quit in 1863 because Brady refused to give them public credit for their work. (They would go on to become some of the best-known photographers of the century.)

Brady, with the glass plates vividly recording the hysteria, horror and occasional glory of the war, and a few early prints for exhibit, may find public interest quickly declining. The government shows no interest in acquiring them. Brady has invested $100,000 in obtaining these pictures, but the government is slow in providing him the promised remuneration.

Despite his pioneering efforts at documenting the war, Brady was bankrupted by the panic of 1873, his business taken over by creditors and rivals, and he did not even know where his pictures were stored. He died impoverished in 1896.

'Yellow Journalist' Crusades for Change through Prizes

(1901)– Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *New York World*, has long been an advocate of independence, criticizing governmental wrongdoing, opposing fraud, advocating principles and ideas rather than prejudices and partisanship, and always upholding the truth. He founded the *Post-Dispatch* in 1878 by merging two papers and boldly advancing his policies. Within four years it was the leading evening area paper.

Although his policies have resulted in determined crusades in the public interest, they have also had a reputation for exploiting stories of murder, sex, and sin, and for sensationalizing

accounts of violence. There have been exaggeration, half-truth, and humor at the expense of embarrassed citizens.

Pulitzer bought the *New York World* in 1883 and quickly attracted attention by following the same formula he had used in St. Louis. But mixed in with the sensationalism and crusades and self-promotion was good news coverage and a solid editorial policy. He pushed harder for the poor and helpless, and attempted to shock authorities into concern and action through news and editorial coverage. Throughout the 1880s, even though the number of pages increased the price to the public remained at two cents due to increases in advertising and ad rates.

In the fall of 1895, William Randolph Hearst, owner of the *San Francisco Examiner*, bought the *New York Journal* and immediately hired away the best editorial talent from the *World*. One of the first to be "bought" was a cartoonist for the Sunday supplement, who had been drawing a series featuring a boy in a yellow nightshirt. Pulitzer's *World* continued to run the cartoon, drawn by another artist, and so, briefly, there were two "versions" appearing each Sunday. The public had already nicknamed him the "Yellow Kid," and so the style of these two papers came to be called Yellow Journalism. They both campaigned vigorously against Spain from 1895 until April, 1898, when war was declared. Yet the *Journal* cared less for the truth or the facts than for the sensational nature of the story, even apparently "manufacturing" news when little or none existed.

This year, the *World* committed itself to a new policy in which it still crusaded for the oppressed, but not at the expense of the truth. Pulitzer, who by this time has become completely blind, considered the public's need for "the whole truth" most important and emphasized the paper's responsibility to its readers both as a crusader and an accurate reporter.

It would not be known until after his death in 1911 how deep his regard for journalistic accuracy had been. In his will, he established the Pulitze School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York, and also endowed a perpetual gift for eight annual prizes in journalism, which were to be awarded annually beginning in 1917.

'Around the World' Stunt Reporter Remembered Best for Personalized Investigative News Style

(January 27, 1922)– "The best reporter in America" died this morning after a brief illness, reported the *New York Evening Journal*. Nellie Bly had been a newspaperwoman for 37 years, largely pioneering an investigative style that was often called "stunt journalism."

At a time when few women were accepted anywhere in journalism, and then only on the "women's pages," she and her female colleagues demonstrated resourcefulness, daring, and a

clear grasp of what the public wanted to read in a never-ending variety of sensational exposes and first-person accounts of oppression. Yet Nellie was able to transcend the merely mawkish to become the best-known woman in American journalism.

Nellie Bly was her "pen name," a common practice of the time. She was christened Elizabeth Cochran. Her father died when she was a child, and her family was plunged from wealth to near-poverty. Throughout life, she had compassion and a strong social conscience, combined with courage and strong self-confidence.

She wrote first for the Pittsburg *Dispatch*, where she acquired her pen name. After three years, she went to New York City, where she gained a position with the *World*, then published by Joseph Pulitzer. She received a daring assignment: have herself committed to a notorious lunatic asylum to expose its horrors. The sensation which followed publication of her series of reports assured her not only a job, but a front-page byline at a time when most stories were uncredited.

Bly is perhaps most often remembered for her widely-publicized attempt in 1889 to "beat the record" of traveling around the world in 80 days, set by Jules Verne's fictional hero Phileas Fogg, which she did, in 72 days.

But she also excelled at a more "solid" type of reporting, providing provocative, often sympathetic interviews with great figures of the day, including Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman, Eugene V. Debs, Illinois Governor John P. Atgeld, John L. Sullivan, Jack Dempsey; or exposing to the public the plight of the poor and the needs of the helpless, often victimized by crooked politicians, wealthy businessmen, or scam artists. Many consider that some of her finest reporting came during the Pullman strike of 1894 and the National Woman Suffrage Convention in 1896.

Two other closest professional friendships were formed early in her career: Erasmus Wilson, the "Quiet Observer" of the Pittsburg *Dispatch*, who had helped her get a start in newspapering, and Arthur Brisbane, a colleague when she first came to the *World*, who became one of the most significant figures in American journalism, serving as managing editor of The *New York Journal* for many years, and who wrote the editorial on her death.

In 1895 she married Robert L. Seaman, a 70-year-old wealthy bachelor. From November 1899 she ran her husband's business, implementing many model innovations to benefit the 1500 employees. By mid-1910, the business faced serious financial difficulty. During several years of legal wrangling, evidence indicated that at least four employees had embezzled $1,680,000, much of it in the form of forged checks. Creditors foreclosed. She fought in court for three years, with only limited success.

Bly planned a three-week vacation in Vienna, leaving New York August 1, 1914. But she did not arrive at her destination until August 22, just as WW I was breaking out everywhere, and ended up staying in Europe for four and a half years. Through previous friendships she was able to secure approval to tour the front lines, thus becoming the first female war correspondent.

She sent her first cable on October 26, and followed up with numerous others, describing the horrors that both soldiers and civilians endured.

Her final three years of reporting for *The Evening Journal* evolved into a loosely-structured advice column, beginning on August 25, 1919 with a column entitled "Am I my brother's keeper?" (her conclusion: yes) and a clearinghouse for assistance of various kinds, especially placing orphans and abandoned children for private adoption.

Ochs Leads Shift to Fact-Based Reporting

(1921)-By 1896 the *New York Times* was a dying newspaper. After the death of founder Henry Raymond in 1869, the *Times* endured more-or-less successfully under a series of leaders for 25 years. By the early 1890s the giant was ailing. A paid circulation of 9,000 was disguised behind a press run of 21,000, but the *Times* lagged far behind other morning dailies. In 1896 Adolph S. Ochs, of the *Chattanooga Times*, made a deal with then-owner Charles R. Miller to buy the paper.

Ochs was born in Cincinnati in 1858, and at the age of 11 began working for the *Knoxville Chronicle* as a carrier boy. He worked his way up, serving as a printer's devil for the *Chronicle* at age 14 before moving to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. He reached the rank of assistant composition room foreman by 1875, then moved to the *Knoxville Tribune* as a typesetter. In 1876 he helped found the *Chattanooga Dispatch*, which faltered after a few months, but Ochs was committed to building a successful paper there.

Securing a loan, in 1878 he bought the *Chattanooga Times* for $250.00. He promised to provide all the local news, the latest telegraph news, and all available commercial news. He built a network of correspondents in the South, bought new presses, published a weekly edition, a trade journal for southern industrialists, an agricultural journal, and a religious newspaper. His editorials called for nonpartisan city government, civic improvements, schools, and a University. When the *Times* hit financial trouble in 1892, Ochs bought the *New York Times* in 1896 to generate new funds.

Ochs lacked the capital for an outright purchase, so he arranged a deal which would give him control of the paper in four years if he could turn it around. His experience with the *Chattanooga Times* served him well in the reorganization of the *Times*. Here he promised all the news with the greatest possible speed; impartial coverage; and a forum for consideration of all questions of

public importance. He chose as his motto "All the news that's fit to print."

Typography and mechanics were improved, and new coverage was added. He printed a list of out-of-town buyers in the city, a daily listing of real estate transactions, daily and weekly stock reports, court records and cases, book reviews, letters to the editor, and editorials. Ad linage passed the *Tribune* the first year, and the *Times* was the first major paper to use telephone solicitations. In 1898, with circulation at 25,000, Ochs took the radical step of cutting prices to raise circulation. Daily issues dropped from 3¢ to 1¢, and by 1899 circulation had risen to 75,000; by 1901 it had topped 100,000. Ad sales doubled in two years, and Ochs gained control under the terms of is agreement.

Ochs' commitment to excellence continued, with construction of the $2.5 million Times Building in 1904 and the introduction of the wireless telegraph in 1907. He later added the moving electronic news bulletins to the Times Building, helping make the paper a New York institution. His managing editor, Carr Van Anda, built a world wide network of correspondents, and their coverage of World War I helped to catapult the *Times* to major stature. During the war, the *Times* printed the text of government documents and speeches, making it the leading reference newspaper for librarians, scholars and government officials. This war reporting climaxed with the publication of the text of the Versailles Treaty. Today, circulation has risen to 330,000 daily and more than 500,000 for Sundays, and advertising linage has increased tenfold.

Breakthrough in Technology Provides Faster Presses, Improved Type, and Photographs

(1910)– With the installation of Ottmar Mergenthaler's Linotype machine in the *New York Tribune* plant in 1886, the large evening dailies could cover more news close to deadline time. The ability to set entire lines of type in a single reusable lead slug brought many other improvements and totally revolutionized the printing world. Slugcasting machines could produce an entire line of type nearly as fast as a typist could type, creating a demand for more dependable, easier-to-read typefaces. Among these were the graceful Cheltenham and Bodoni families, both appearing soon after 1900.

The leading manufacturer of printing presses, R. Hoe & Company, had converted many of the larger presses from hand to steam power early in the nineteenth century, and from flatbed to rotary before the Civil War. Advances included curved stereotype plates, continuous rolls of newsprint, printing on both sides of the paper in one operation, automated folders, and color printing.

By the late 1890s, most of the large presses had shifted to the use of stereotyped plates and webs, enabling them to print up to

48,000 twelve-page papers in an hour. A full-color press was installed at the *New York World* in 1893.

Editors had long searched for better ways to include illustrations in their publications, and by the 1870s had settled on Zincographs, etchings produced by an artist, based upon a photograph. Still, numerous editors hoped for a way to utilize photographs directly. Frederic E. Ives, head of the photographic laboratory at Cornell University in the late 1870s, developed a way to break up masses of dark and light by changing everything to a series of dots placed at varying distances apart, which he called the halftone photoengraving process.

Although the first successful halftone in the U.S. was published in 1880, it was not until 1897 that Ives had perfected the method sufficiently for printing in the *New York Tribune*. Very quickly, the other large papers were also running halftone reproductions of photographs.

Photography develops as journalistic effort

(1912)– The science of photography was developed during the 1820s and 30s by Joseph Niépce and Louis Daguerre. With the public release of the formula by the French government on August 19, 1839, artist/scientists in both Europe and the U.S. began to explore its possibilities.

One of the first to see its journalistic uses was Mathew Brady. Other early pioneers were Eadweard Muybridge and John D. Isaacs, who in 1877 used 24 cameras to demonstrate the gait of a galloping horse. Yet it was an awkward, clumsy kind of art, using various liquid chemicals and glass plates for negatives.

Thus, when George Eastman announced the Kodak camera in 1888, using a flexible roll of dry film, another innovation occurred. Within ten years, halftone reproductions of photographs were being included in many of the major newspapers, and by the early part of this century, photographers were a part of every daily newspaper staff. The shift from art and science to journalism was unusually rapid and rewarding.

Rise of Tabloids Brings Era of 'Jazz Journalism' to American Press

(1933)– With the close of World War I, a new cycle of journalistic sensationalism began. Similar to the penny press of the 1830s and the new journalism of the 1890s, this wave of sensationalism found the right conditions and an untapped audience ready for such an appeal.

Like the earlier periods, this wave of sensationalism affected all of the press before it subsided, and resulted in a more substantial form of journalism once it was over. However, this era was accompanied by the use of two techniques that identify the period: a tabloid-style format and extensive use of photography.

The 1920s have become known as the decade of Jazz Journalism, and subsequent years have seen a marked increase of emphasis on the techniques of interpretive reporting.

Although small-sized newspapers had been common throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the tabloids of this era owe their size and style to England. In 1903 Alfred C. Harmsworth began the *Daily Mirror* as a newspaper for women, but soon converted it into a "half-penny illustrated." By 1909, its circulation had reached a million copies, other British newspapers jumped into the field.

In New York, the *Illustrated Daily News* began publishing on June 26, 1919. Within a few months, it became the *New York Daily News*, but it struggled for several more months before editor Joseph Medill Patterson found his circulation niche with the immigrant and poorly-educated citizens, who appreciated the heavy emphasis on large photographs and brief, sensationalized stories.

By 1921 the *Daily News* became second in circulation to Hearst's *Evening Journal*, and in 1924 the *News* became America's most widely circulated newspaper. That year brought heavy competition in the form of Hearst's *Mirror*, and a new paper begun by Bemarr Macfadden, the *Daily Graphic*. It was the *Graphic* which set out to see just how sensational and lurid it could be, resulting in a battle that has been characterized as "gutter journalism."

The climax of the war of the tabloids was 1926-1928. Not content with reporting such scandalous events as nude dancing girls in a bathtub of champagne, or the antics of a wealthy real-estate man and his 15-year-old bride, editors dug up unresolved murders and pushed for trials. Although one ended in acquittal and a suit for libel, another ended with a woman sentenced to execution in the electric chair at Sing Sing.

Although the *Graphic* covered her last thoughts before execution, it was the *News* that had the last word, by ignoring the prohibition on photography and sending in a photographer with a tiny camera strapped to his ankle to take a picture just after the current was turned on. The resulting touched-up full-page shot sold an extra 250,000 papers!

Broadcasting Established as Additional News Service

(1944)— From the successful broadcast of Enrico Caruso's tenor voice from the Metropolitan Opera stage in 1910 to March 1, 1920, the growing field of "radiotelegraphy" was carefully controlled by the government.

Broadcasting, of course, could not be successful unless there were ways to receive the transmissions. Fortunately for the radio experimenters, a rapidly-growing core of amateur enthusiasts had built their own crystal sets to pick up the broadcasts on their headphones.

Congress had enacted a law in 1912 directing the Department of Commerce to issue licenses to private broadcasters and assign wave lengths for commercial operators. On November 2, 1920, Westinghouse station KDKA in Pittsburgh began regular broadcasting, and in October, 1921, the *Detroit News* began broadcasting from station WWJ. Soon newspapers in many other major cities established their own stations. General Electric set up WGY in Schenectady, New York, and ATT built WEAF (now WNBC) in New York City.

Almost immediately, it was apparent that radio could become a paying proposition. The number of stations increased from 30 in 1922 to 556 in 1923; the number of receiving sets jumped from some 50,000 in 1921 to more than 600,000 in 1922. The three corporations established a consortium called Radio Corporation of America. In 1926, ATT sold its station, and the other partners established the National Broadcasting Company as an RCA subsidiary, which had phenomenal growth, forming nation-wide networks in 1927. In 1930, an antitrust action forced them to dispose of their holdings in RCA.

But by then a rival company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, was also well established. In 1934, NBC had 127 affiliated stations and CBS had 97, and a third network had been formed. In fact, growth was so rapid that the 1912 law was no longer sufficient to control the chaos of the airwaves. The Radio Act of 1927 had attempted to regulate all forms of radio communication, and did succeed in establishing some order. Federal authority was broadened in 1934 with the establishment of the Federal Communications Commission, which took over jurisdiction over all telecommunications.

Although newspapers had assisted the development of commercial transmission stations, by 1928 the newspapers were becoming increasingly opposed to sharing news and information with them, and in 1932 the ANPA formally voted not to furnish news to radio networks. The radio industry attempted to gather the news itself, but found the collection of news expensive and attempted several alternatives, including the Press-Radio Bureau. By 1935, the wire service networks began preparing reports especially for radio clients, and by 1970 the UPI and AP each served some 3,200 radio and TV stations.

It was the start of World War II that brought news broadcasting to maturity. CBS covered the 20-day Munich crisis in September with live broadcasts from 14 European cities, including Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Rome, and London. Americans heard the voices of major politicians firsthand, with 471 separate broadcasts totaling nearly 48 hours of air time. NBC and Mutual provided similar coverage. To illustrate how fully radio news had come of age, NBC had devoted 2.8 percent of total program hours to news in 1937, but in 1944 it was 26.4 percent.

'Funny Papers' Continue to Charm Readers

(1939)– Humorous-panel artists proliferated after Richard F. Outcault's "Yellow Kid" in 1896. Rudolph Dirks' "Katzenjammer Kids" was the longest-lived of all American comics, running from 1897 to 1980, but many others were also originated in the early days and are still remembered affectionately.

These comic strips were designed for the Sunday papers, and began to appear in color as early as the late 1890s. Arising as major competitors in the comic-strip business by the end of World War I were the Hearst-owned King Features Syndicate and the United Features combine. Included are "Bringing Up Father," 1912; "Barney Google," 1919; "Gasoline Alley," 1919; Olive Oyl and Popeye, 1919; "Moon Mullins," 1923; Rube Goldberg's "Boob McNutt," 1924; "Little Orphan Annie," 1924; and "Blondie," 1930.

The continuing story strip was first introduced with "Andy Gump" in 1917, and was developed into the action story with "Tarzan" in 1929, "Dick Tracy" and "Joe Palooka" in 1931, and "Terry and the Pirates" in 1934. "Buck Rogers" began in 1929 and "Superman" in 1939.

Scholastic Journalism

Gazette

These articles are intended to provide students with an understanding of how the press has helped to develop and has been the beneficiary of many of the freedoms all Americans enjoy. It can also be used in its straight historical context as the evolution of technology, or in a more philosophical way as the evolution of ideas and concepts (*ie.*, views *vs.* news, advocacy *vs.* propaganda, objectivity *vs.* yellow journalism, and responsibility to one's readers).

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Facts and related data for this paper were drawn from the book *The Press and America*, fifth edition, by Edwin Emery and Michael Emery. Information regarding Anne Catharine Green came from *Smithsonian* magazine. Information regarding Nellie Bly came from the book *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist*, by Brooke Kroeger.

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